

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

JUNE 2009

EAST LOS ANGELES LIGHT RAIL LINE

by JACK WHITMEYER

Driving Metro's so-called extension of the Gold Line to East Los Angeles proved to be interesting from the standpoint of construction. The line is basically complete, however Metro contractors were seen working on the overhead and traffic signal circuits. The track and the Boyle Heights tunnel appear to be complete, looking ready for service. As is true of Metro Light Rail, all stations have raised floor height platforms.

The catenary overhead is of the double-hung design as found on the Gold Line, and is supported from center street poles along both First and Third Streets, reducing roadway use to one lane in each direction with limited parking. Elsewhere along Alameda Street and Indiana Street, the tracks are located on the east side of the roadway. Tracks on the First Street Bridge have been built on the north half of the bridge, however construction is underway widening the structure on the north for westbound vehicular traffic.

Taking into consideration that the Blue Line has considerable single contact wire supported from span wires attached to poles in the sidewalk as found along Washington Blvd., one can only wonder why this otherwise expensive overhead is necessary. The single wire continues to be satisfactory for the Blue Line. With today's funding always difficult to obtain, it is obvious Metro engineering design has gone overboard with their ultra "Cadillac" overhead. Beyond that, someone is bound to complain about reduced street width and visual pollution!

This should be an interesting line for the rail enthusiast, considering the amount of street running isolated from street traffic and street crossings equipped with traffic signal preemption. The Boyle Heights tunnel has two underground stations and is surely equipped with block signals for safety. Opening day should be most festive for all!

PORT OF LONG BEACH RAIL EXPANSION

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, on April 13, unanimously approved a 10-year, \$750-million expansion project that will merge two aging terminals and create an estimated 14,000 jobs. Work on the Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project will be done in phases, according to James C. Hankla, president of the board of commissioners. Construction could begin as early as December.

The project aims to improve the port's competitive position and implement measures to head off threatened lawsuits to force reductions in port-related pollution. About 65,000 feet of railroad track will be added so that nearly one-third of Middle Harbor's cargo will be moved by train, and with dockside electrical power to become available, vessels will be able to turn off their auxiliary diesel engines.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



A brand new MP36 locomotive departs the downtown Burbank station northbound with an afternoon Metrolink train in March 2009.

Photo by John Petros

TEHACHAPI REPORT

by MARGO D. PETROS

According to Tehachapi City Manager, Greg Garrett, in a telephone call on May 4, 2009, bids to rebuild the Tehachapi railroad station are to be received from the contractors on May 14, 2009.

The "100th Anniversary of the Founding of Tehachapi Celebration" will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 13, 2009. The rebuilt station will be completed, but will not be open to the public until September 2009.

ALTAMONT COMMUTER EXPRESS

While the Altamont Corridor is not part of the main trunk line between Southern California and San Francisco, it is slated for "higher speed" connector service between the trunk line and other parts of Northern California. Through a partnership between the ACE and the High Speed Rail Authority, current train travel times can be dramatically reduced, providing attractive service for both long-distance and commuter trips. Preliminary analysis for a preferred alignment across the Altamont Pass is underway.

[Info. from *Keeping Track* via Ed Von Nordeck]

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of March 2009, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 332,115. This was an average increase per day from February of 20,101 riders or more than 6 percent.



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EDITOR DICK FINLEY
 TECHNICAL EDITOR CHARLES VARNES
 MAILER JOHN STALLKAMP

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MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH
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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

June 5 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Saunders Yard**, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce.
 Fri.
 June 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 20, 27
 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: June 27.
 June 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 20, 27
 Day: 6, 20; Extra Day: 13, 27. Committee Meeting: 20.
 June 12 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 June 19 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes & Herbert Streets, Commerce. Everyone Welcome.
 Fri.
 July 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Fri.
 July 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 18, 25
 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: July 25.
 July 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders

18, 25 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Day: 4, 18; Extra Day: 11, 25; Committee Meeting: 18.

July 10 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

June 12: **See some of the treasures from your Museum!** This will be a **digital** presentation of slides, photographs, and artifacts. We've made great strides in our archiving, and will share some of the fruits. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

July 10: A video of **UP and "Fallen Flags!"** It's still hard to believe, no more **SP**, no more **Santa Fe**. On this evening we'll see **Roger Fogt's** videos of both in action on Southern California rails in the period of 1991 to 1999. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by VIRGINIA GRUPP

At the Board Meeting on May 1 there were no late renewals. New members voted into PRS on that date were Bruce Kaiser, Gary Herod, and Norm Orfall, who were assigned seniority numbers 482 to 484, respectively.

JAMES JOHN ERDMAN

Jim was born May 15, 1944 in Sheboygan, WI, and passed away on April 23, 2009. Jim joined the U.S. Navy in 1962. He lived in Long Beach for a number of years, working as a design engineer for Douglas Aircraft. He moved back to Wisconsin in the 1970s.

Jim was a member of Pacific Railroad Society, National Railway Historical Society, and C & NW Historical Society. Jim was a true railroad fan, having taken countless train excursions over the years in the U.S. and Canada.

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRON

After over four months without a fatality, Caltrain suffered two in two days. On May 4, Train No. 240 struck a trespasser north of the San Antonio station, in what has been determined a suicide. This was Caltrain's first fatality of 2009. Then, the following morning, Train No. 329 struck another trespasser at the East Meadow crossing, just north of the previous day's incident. As I write this, it had not been determined whether or not this was also a suicide. In both cases, single tracking was required past the incidents, resulting in delays of up to an hour.

Caltrain's Board of Directors is considering declaring a fiscal emergency in June. The board says Caltrain will run out of money by this time next year if such a move isn't taken.

The fiscal emergency declaration would allow Caltrain to raise fares and run fewer trains or make fewer stops. Any fare increases and/or service reductions would take effect in October. It would exempt Caltrain from state environmental reviews, making it easier to implement the changes. As of now, Caltrain will come up about \$10 million short for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

In April, the Caltrain Board unanimously approved an agreement with the California High Speed Rail Authority for planning, design, and construction of improvements along the Caltrain corridor. Initial designs have called for the high speed

trains running alongside Caltrain, requiring a wider right-of-way. This has brought cries of protest from many peninsula cities, with Palo Alto leading the way. Alternate proposals include running the high speed trains underground, entering the Bay Area via Altamont Pass instead of Pacheco Pass, and terminating the trains in San Jose.

By the end of summer, all of Caltrain's ticket vending machines (TVMs) will also sell parking tickets. This will save a lot of time for passengers driving to the station. Unlike the stand-alone parking ticket machines, the TVMs will accept credit and debit cards.

RAILROAD CARS SIT IDLE DUE TO RECESSION

A three-mile stretch of track from Monrovia to Irwindale is lined with rail cars owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. Declining shipping volumes have rendered the cars unusable until business picks up, BNSF officials said. "It's really based on the economy," spokeswoman Lena Kent said. "We're utilizing any and all available rail space that we have."

The Metro Gold Line Construction Authority brokered a meeting the first week of April between BNSF and city leaders from Irwindale, Arcadia and Monrovia, who say the empty rail cars attract graffiti and other blight. Rail officials promised during the meeting to work on finding a solution.

Since the cars are not owned by the cities, local officials have no authority to clean up graffiti as they normally would. BNSF is using the track under an agreement with Metrolink, which owns the rails. Cities are asking BNSF to either put together a graffiti abatement program or allow them to send in their own cleaning crews.

How graffiti would be removed from rail cars may be an issue, Kent said. If cities paint over taggings, BNSF is concerned that identification could be accidentally covered. The company would prefer cleaning crews use pressure washers. BNSF expected to have an answer for cities by the middle of April. [Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

BULLET TRAINS AND PASSENGER RAIL

A French high-speed train, with a souped-up engine and special wheels, has broken the world speed record for conventional train systems near Grigny, eastern France, by reaching a speed of 357.2 mph. Advocates say Americans may now be ready to embrace high-speed rail, similar to the fast "bullet" trains that streak through Europe and Japan.

Japan's Shinkansen line could reach speeds of 186 mph in 2011, when a new E-5 series of trains is scheduled to take to the rails. Improved suspensions and a car-body tilting system will make the ride more comfortable around curves. Power-reclining shell seats in first class will provide what engineers call a "peaceful and soothing time during your travels."

The trains planned for 2025 will reduce the travel time between Tokyo and Nagoya to 40 minutes from about 90 minutes. At that speed, commuters could go from Los Angeles to the Bay Area in slightly more than an hour. Rail officials say as many as 200,000 passengers could use the line daily.

Still, the Shinkansen isn't perfect. The trains often cause a rail version of a sonic boom as they emerge from tunnels. That's because they enter so fast that they create a bubble of air

pressure that is pushed along until they emerge. The trains remain in stations for only two minutes – not a moment more or less – before easing out and quickly gaining speed.

The Obama administration designated 10 passenger rail corridors for possible high-speed rail projects on April 16. Funding is to come from the \$8 billion allocated in the economic stimulus package. The corridors are: *Northern New England, Empire, Keystone Southeast, Florida, Chicago hub network, Gulf Coast, South Central, California, and Pacific Northwest.*

President Barack Obama wants America to move swiftly to a system of high-speed rail travel. Give the president credit for seizing on what should be a national priority; catching up with European and Asian countries that are decades ahead of the United States in developing bullet trains.

"This is not some fanciful, pie-in-the sky vision of the future," Obama said in announcing the plan. "It's been happening for decades. The problem is, it's been happening elsewhere, not here."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

RIDERSHIP AND SCHEDULE ADHERENCE

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during March 2009 were 42,890, which was a decrease from the previous month of 423 or about 2 percent. Average weekday, Metrolink monthly passholders on Amtrak were 1,891, which was a decrease from the previous month of 74 or about 4 percent.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, total schedule adherence (less than five minutes delay) for March was 94 percent.

FEE VOTE

The Metrolink Board of Directors postponed the vote to increase fares ranging from 3.5 percent to 5.5 percent until the Board meeting in late May, because of economic concerns of riders, officials said. Board members are "uncomfortable with any fare increases at this point," Metrolink spokesperson Francisco Oaxaca said. Still, increases are necessary "due to the fact that costs to operate the service are going up every year and that's the amount that was determined to maintain the current service," he said.

The Board has increased rates by 3.5 percent a year since 2005. This year, the board is considering a 4.5-percent hike, Oaxaca said. The new rates would have taken effect July 1, but it will take 60 days to reprogram ticket machines to accommodate the proposed changes.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

PERRIS VALLEY LINE

The Perris Valley Line would extend Metrolink service 24 miles farther into Riverside County, directly serving the communities of Riverside, Moreno Valley, and Perris. The service would extend the existing Metrolink 91 Line, which currently runs from Riverside to Fullerton and Los Angeles. The Perris Valley Line will run in an existing freight corridor, constructed more than 120 years ago, adjacent to the I-215.

The Perris Valley Line would attract an estimated 5,700 riders daily, providing them a 40-minute commute from South Perris to downtown Riverside compared to the projected 80-minute commute for rush hour traffic in 2025. The service would eliminate thousands of vehicle trips per day on I-215 and

SR-60 serving commuters from the cities of Temecula, Murrieta, Menifee, Perris, Moreno Valley, Hemet and San Jacinto.

The Perris Valley Line project would include track rehabilitation with welded rail, new track for a 9-mile segment parallel to I-215 south of Box Springs Road where SR-60 separates from I-215, a new connection with BNSF north of the city of Riverside called the Citrus Connection, track relocated to a new platform at Perris Station, five new stations with provisions for two stations later to meet future demand, a maintenance facility near River Crest Drive where SR-60 separates from I-215, and a layover facility at I-215 and Mapes Road. New stations are Palmyrita Station with 460 parking spaces in 2011, University of California-Riverside Station with no parking spaces, Moreno Valley/March Field Station with 430 parking spaces in 2011, Perris Station with 440 parking spaces in 2011, and South Perris Station with 860 parking spaces in 2011.

Future stops are at Fair Isle, north of where SR-60 separates from I-215, and Ramona Station north of Perris at Ramona Expressway. The train also will stop at Downtown Riverside Station with 870 existing parking spaces.

The five stations would be constructed to Metrolink standards and feature a 680-foot platform with track-side canopy structures, ticket kiosks, schedule information, and low-water use landscaping.

Enhancements would be made at 21 existing grade crossings and could include flashing warning devices, gates, raised center medians, striping, signing and pavement markings, crossing safety lighting, and pedestrian safety improvements. Three grade crossings in Perris would be closed.

Riverside County Transportation Commission has held a total of 12 community meetings since beginning the project. Public input at these meetings has led to changes in the design of the project. The public's primary concerns throughout the process have been safety, noise, and rail traffic.

Federal law mandates that railroads have positive train control in place by 2015. Although the specific technology has not been prescribed, Metrolink and the railroads are developing plans to meet that mandate. One technique that could be implemented sooner than 2015 is use of automatic train stop technology. If, for any reason, the train engineer does not respond to a red light, the train's brakes will be activated, bringing the train to a stop.

The Perris Valley Line corridor has been used for freight since the 1880s. When RCTC purchased the San Jacinto Branch Line track from BNSF, BNSF retained freight operating rights on the track. Metrolink trains, however, would receive priority. The new Perris Valley Line service would add six round trips per day to the existing rail traffic.

BNSF operates an average of three round trips per day on the track and serves eight shippers that have spur lines south of Eastridge Avenue, near where SR-60 separates from I-215. The slightly faster travel times possible on the short length of track improved for the Perris Valley Line would not constitute an incentive to increase freight traffic. Any advantage from increased speeds would be more than offset by the time required for local switching activity and the generally multi-state character of most freight trips make these short distance improvements irrelevant.

[Info. from *Perris Valley Line* via Ed Von Nordeck]

FIRST SEALED CORRIDOR CROSSING

With funding from the City of Glendale, the Flower Street crossing opened in April as part of Metrolink's industry leading Sealed Corridor Program. This brand-new crossing is a busy one, with 55 passenger trains and several freight trains passing through each day as they serve the Antelope Valley and Ventura County lines. The crossing is one of several traffic-mitigating measures outlined in the City of Glendale's Grand Central Creative Campus Redevelopment Project.

It is designed to keep vehicles and pedestrians out of harm's way when trains pass. The new crossing features quad gates spanning the entire width of the street and raised concrete medians to prevent motorists from driving around gates; new measures to provide pedestrians safe passage across the tracks; advanced signal preemption technology that can prevent bottlenecks when trains approach; and increased signage to provide additional warnings against turns into a crossing when trains are approaching.

This crossing is the first to have the full complement of new safety measures under Metrolink's innovative Sealed Corridor Program, the country's largest program of comprehensive grade crossing improvements in a densely populated area. Nearly 120 existing Metrolink grade crossings throughout the San Fernando Valley and in Ventura, Orange, and San Bernardino counties are slated for improvements, including several additional grade-crossing projects in the Glendale/Los Angeles corridor.

[Info. from *Metrolink Matters*]

METROLINK FARES TO RISE THIS SUMMER

Fares on Metrolink trains will go up by an average of 3 percent system-wide this summer, transit officials announced May 15. The hike, approved by their Board of Directors, would equal a \$5 to \$6 increase a month for a typical monthly pass holder, said Metrolink spokesman Francisco Oaxaca. The typical increase is to cover the rising cost of operating existing services, he said.

The increase is scheduled to take effect July 1, but it could be delayed 30 days to August 1 because programming of the ticket vending machines typically takes 60 days, Oaxaca said.

Passengers will continue to be able to use their Metrolink tickets to transfer for free to 20 other transit operators, such as Metro, through June 2010, Oaxaca said.

LEASED REPLACEMENT PASSENGER CARS

Beginning in late 2009, the first of over 100 new Metrolink passenger cars will begin entering service. These cars will have incorporated state of the art Crash Energy Management technology that will better protect passengers in the event of an incident. Metrolink will be the first passenger rail service in the country to place cars of this type into service. They will also allow cars from the current fleet to be taken out of service for upgrades and rehabilitation.

During the last several years, Metrolink has leased passenger cars from other transit providers to provide additional capacity on their trains. Some of these cars must now be taken out of service and returned to their owners. Five cars leased from Seattle's commuter train service were to be returned by May 1, 2009. To replace those cars, Metrolink has leased replacement of previously owned passenger cars from the commuter train

service in Salt Lake City, Utah. Those cars were purchased by the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) and refurbished for future use on their commuter rail service. They are single level cars and are equipped with 102 seats compared to the existing Metrolink cars which have 144 seats.

Because the UTA cars are not completely compatible with the existing Metrolink bi-level passenger car fleet, only one car will appear on each train that they are used for and the car will always be directly behind the locomotive. They also do not have some features the regular Metrolink passenger cars have.

- The doors on the UTA cars will open at each stop as they do on the existing Metrolink cars. Passengers will also be able to walk from a UTA car to the adjacent Metrolink car but it should only be done while the train is stopped.
- The UTA cars do not have restrooms or water fountains.
- The UTA cars are not accessible to individuals with disabilities.

A UTA car will replace a regular Metrolink passenger car on each train so that the Metrolink car can be used in a train on a given line to ensure that there will be no additional crowding caused by the replacement of a regular Metrolink passenger car by a UTA car. UTA cars will appear shortly on the following train lines.

- Ventura County Line trains 103, 104, 108, 111, 115 and 118
- Antelope Valley Line trains 200, 201, 204, 205, 208, 209, 212, 213, 214, 215, 218, 219, 220 and 221
- San Bernardino Line trains 303, 306, 309, 312, 313, 320, 324, 329, 334, 336 and 337
- Riverside Line trains 402, 403, 404, 406 and 411
- Orange County Line trains 682, 684, 685 and 687
- 91 Line trains 701, 704, 705, 706 and 707
- Inland Empire-Orange County Line trains 804 and 807
- Glendale, Burbank, Burbank-Bob Hope Airport trains 904, 905, 906 and 907

Please remember that this is temporary and that Metrolink appreciates their passengers' patience while awaiting the arrival of new Metrolink passenger cars later this year.

[Info. from Metrolink via Ed Von Nordeck]

PORTLAND STREETCAR AND MAX GET PRAISE

In two national media appearances, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on April 14 pointed to Portland's light-rail and streetcar networks as models for the nation and promised to create a program to help other communities emulate the city.

LaHood's views are closely watched in Oregon. The state has reaped hundreds of millions of dollars in federal spending on light rail – not including streetcars – and bridges with programs pushed by its congressional delegation and previous transportation secretaries.

Later in the day, LaHood told a national media telephone conference call that his department is working with the Housing and Urban Development Department to create a program to use streetcars to promote urban development that cuts down on pollution and driving.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

UNION PACIFIC SUED OVER SMUGGLING

Union Pacific Railroad was sued by the U.S. Department of

Justice on March 18 seeking \$37 million in damages for allegedly failing to prevent its rail cars from being used to smuggle drugs into the country. U.S. customs inspectors on at least 38 occasions between 2001 and 2006 discovered marijuana or cocaine in UP rail cars at border crossings at Brownsville, Texas, and Calexico, Calif., according to the two complaints filed on 3/18.

"We're being punished for drug smuggling from Mexico that we have no ability to prevent," said Donna Kush, a spokeswoman for UP. The federal government said its inspectors found more than two tons of marijuana and more than 100 kilograms of cocaine on company rail cars, many of which were listed as empty on manifests, the complaint alleges.

Seizures included 61 kilograms of marijuana, found in the spine of a rail car, 29 kilograms of marijuana discovered in a hidden compartment of a flat-bed car and 117 kilograms of cocaine in a false wall of a rail car at the border crossing in Brownsville.

The Department of Homeland Security has told UP that it should hire an outside security company or work with its business partner, Ferrocarril Mexicano, of which it is a part owner. The spokeswoman for Union Pacific, which has its own police force in the U.S., said that setting up a security team in Mexico would be unrealistic and potentially dangerous. "We wouldn't be allowed to carry arms or use K-9 teams. . . We'd be unarmed in the face of vicious drug gangs," Kush said.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

**PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES
AMTRAK**

In May Amtrak's Bear, Del. shops began an estimated 2½-year project to rehabilitate 60 out of service *Amfleet* cars. Most of the 30- to 35-year-old cars will undergo asbestos removal and every car will get reconditioned heating and air conditioning systems, new lighting, windows and wiring, installation of 110-volt outlets at every seat or table, and emergency and disaster lighting along the floor.

The project also includes the conversion of 20 food service cars to coaches and the repair and refurbishment of 12 cars which had been damaged in accidents.

The \$58.5 million project is funded from Amtrak's \$1.3 billion of federal stimulus money.

Historical On-Time Performance

BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages

The latest Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages posted on the BNSF News web page before column deadline were:

Amtrak On-Time Performance		2009-05-04
TRAINS	MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	79%	85%
Short-Distance Trains	98%	94%
Pacific Surfliners	97%	97%

LONG-DISTANCE TRAINS

Crescent

Amtrak commemorated the 30th anniversary of their operation of the historic *Crescent* service as part of National Train Day on May 9th with a special event in New Orleans, and smaller events at stops along the train's route in Atlanta, and Meridian and Hattiesburg, Miss.

Beginning in June, a new menu will be offered in the *Crescent's* dining car. Selections will include Low Country Shrimp and Grits, Louisiana Crawfish Etouffee, Coastal Crab Cakes with Remoulade Sauce and Seared Catfish Creole topped off with a Mississippi Snickers Mud Cake or Southern Pecan Pie — all items inspired by the rich culinary regions of the train's route.

Crescent and Florida Service Trains

Effective April 22, the consists of the *Crescent* (Tr. Nos. 19/20), *Silver Star* (Tr. Nos. 91/92), and *Silver Meteor* (Tr. Nos. 97/98) were rearranged with the sleeping cars being placed at the rear of the trains.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

San Joaquin

Summertime Thruway Service

Yosemite To Mammoth Lakes

A new summertime Thruway bus connection from Yosemite to Mammoth Lakes will begin on June 6. The buses will connect with the Merced-Yosemite Valley buses at the Yosemite Valley Visitors Center. Bus No. 8662 will connect from Bus Nos. 8402 and 8412. Bus No. 8667 will connect to Bus Nos. 8403 and 8417. At Merced the buses connect with *San Joaquin* trains.

Bus No. 8662			Bus No. 8667	
5 00 P	Dp	Yosemite-Visitors Center	Ar	10 55 A
5 30 P	Ar	Yosemite-Crane Flat	Dp	10 20 A
6 00 P	Ar	Yosemite-Wolf Lodge	Dp	9 50 A
7 30 P	Ar	Tuolumne Meadows	Dp	9 05 A
8 00 P	Ar	Lee Vining	Dp	8 20 A
8 51 P	Ar	June Lake	Dp	7 50 A

The buses will operate on Saturday and Sunday June 6-June 28 and Sept. 5-Sept. 27. During July and August the buses will operate daily.

They will be full-size motor coaches with restrooms and wheelchair access.

Las Vegas-Bakersfield Bus Cancellations

Effective May 11 Las Vegas-Bakersfield Thruway Bus Nos. 4202, 4203, 4214 and 4217 were cancelled. Bus No. 4317 which connects to Tr. No.717 and Bus No. 4312 which connects from Tr. No. 712 will continue to operate.

DEPOT DOINGS

LONGVIEW, TEX. Union Pacific has agreed to sell its Longview depot to the city for \$125,480, which includes a 20 year lease of the land. The City plans to create a multimodal transportation center at the site. It is seeking American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to help pay for the renovation. Longview is located on the *Texas Eagle* route.

WASHINGTON (D.C.) UNION STATION. Effective May 11, ticket sales began stopping five minutes before train time and the gates began closing two minutes before train time. At the other two stations with such policies, Chicago and Denver, ticket sales cease 10 before departure and close the gates at five minutes.

VIA RAIL CANADIAN

On April 23 the first VIA Rail *Canadian/Canadien* departed from Toronto with its consist expanded for the spring travel

season.

Its 2 unit, 17 car consist was: 6431 F40PH-2/6438 F40PH-2/8616 Baggage/8143 Coach/8101 Coach /8500 Skyline/8339 *Sherwood Manor*/8310 *Brock Manor*/8325 *Elgin Manor*/8412 *Kent* (Diner A)/8335 *Mackenzie Manor*/8333 *Lorne Manor*/8328 *Grant Manor*/8509 *Skyline*/8407 *Emerald* (Diner B)/8337 *Osler Manor*/8336 *Monck Manor*/8324 *Dusmuir Manor*/8710 *Prince Albert Park*.

The previous Train, which departed on April 21, had 2 units and 11 cars. Its consist was: 6445 F40PH-2/6404F40PH-2/8606 Baggage/8142 Coach/8129 Coach/8506 *Skyline*/8332 *Laird Manor*/8319 *Dawson Manor*/8409 *Fairholme* Diner/8327 *Fraser Manor*/8317 *Cornwall Manor*/8303 *Amherst Manor*/8717 *Waterton Park*.

The *Manor* sleeping cars contain 3 sections, 4 roomettes, 1 compartment, and 5 double bedrooms. A shower is located in space formerly occupied by the fourth section.

The *Park* sleeper buffet-lounge dome observation cars contain 1 drawing room, 3 double bedrooms, a 24-seat dome, and a lounge.

The *Canadian* departs from Toronto at 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, with a scheduled arrival in Vancouver at 9:42 a.m. on Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday. Vancouver departures are at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday, with a scheduled arrival in Toronto at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

UNION PACIFIC SOLAR PANELS STOLEN

Eight batteries and 16 solar panels were stolen from the Union Pacific Railroad on March 26. The theft occurred near Pulga, Calif., a remote location in the Feather River Canyon. Solar panels owned by others in the area have been stolen, also. Authorities do not believe that the thefts are related.

Pulga is on the UP Canyon Subdivision which runs along the north fork of the Feather River. The Subdivision is the former Western Pacific Railroad Third Subdivision. From 1949 through 1970 the line was traversed daily by the *California Zephyr*.

[Info. from Charles Varnes]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

RIDERSHIP

March 2009	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	150,511	79,412	39,322	24,293
Saturday Ave.	97,268	60,438	21,121	15,015
Sunday Ave.	80,497	55,933	17,455	12,374
Monthly Total	4,102,796	2,268,476	1,036,841	656,364

[Info. From Ken Ruben]

NO FEDERAL FUNDS GOING TO GOLD LINE

San Gabriel Valley leaders expressed dismay on May 11 after learning that the Gold Line Foothill Extension project would not get federal stimulus money. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority will instead apply \$66.7 million in federal funds to the nearly completed Eastside Extension, which will connect East Los Angeles to downtown when the line opens in about a month, officials said.

San Gabriel Valley officials had hoped that a cash infusion

for the Foothill Extension would create 26,530 jobs. The Eastside Extension will create one job: \$126,000 for a staff worker whose job will be to tell the Metro Gold Line Foothill Construction Authority “no.”

It was President Obama who insisted the federal stimulus for transportation be used to create jobs, not for hoarding. Remember the cry only “shovel-ready projects?” There is no other rail project in the state that is more “shovel ready” than the Gold Line Foothill. It has been studied, planned, environmentally cleared and is ready to go. All the cities welcome it and some have built stations and mixed-use projects. Students from Citrus College and Azusa Pacific University have signed pledges to ride it. It has no opposition. Yet it was bypassed for federal funds.

The MTA can say well, the Gold Line will get money from the new Measure R half-cent sales tax. While it is scheduled to receive \$735 million, the question is when. The Gold Line Foothill Construction Authority was ready to start filling jobs now, for construction to start in June 2010 and completion of Phase One by 2013. But the MTA is talking about delaying the funding until 2013 and pushing back roll dates to 2017. At a meeting on May 14, the MTA was to talk about how the funding originally predicted from the sales tax (\$40 billion over 30 years) would be considerably less.

If and when the Gold Line Foothill Extension gets Measure R funds, it will only be to extend the line to Azusa. The second phase to Montclair/Ontario will cost more – that’s where the federal funding could’ve come in handy. It could be the first rail line in Southern California to connect to an airport – in this case, Ontario International Airport.

Because the Gold Line is not in MTA’s Long Range Plan, it did not qualify under the guidelines for the stimulus money, according to MTA spokesman Rick Jager.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Despite some misgivings, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors (MTA) voted on April 23 to use a Spanish translation as the name of the Eastside Extension, making a first for the transportation agency. The entire light rail line, which stretches from Pasadena to the eastern edge of East Los Angeles, will still be called the Gold Line. But the segment that opens this summer, traversing Boyle Heights and East L.A., will also be named “*la Linea de Oro*, Edward R. Roybal,” in Spanish language MTA literature and brochures and on station signs. In English materials, that segment will be called “the Edward R. Roybal Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.”

In her motion, County Supervisor Gloria Molina said that community members had asked that the rail line be referred to in Spanish, which she called a “cornerstone of Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles.”

Maya Emsden, an MTA executive who oversees signage and the design of maps, said she did not know of any other light rail line in the country with two names, let alone in different languages. The motion also breaks ground for the MTA. “We don’t translate proper nouns,” Emsden said. “This is a first.”

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland–Milwaukie Light-Rail Line

The Federal Transit Administration has approved a new stage of development for a Portland to Milwaukie light-rail line, a milestone for the \$1.4 billion project, TriMet said April 1, 2009. The administration approved the beginning of preliminary engineering, which means TriMet can spend money to plan details of the MAX line and be sure at least 50 percent of the project’s expenses will be covered by federal dollars.

Construction and planning will create up to 12,300 jobs and generate up to \$490 million in personal earnings until the line opens in 2015. Construction could start in 2011.

The 7.3-mile line will include the first downtown Portland bridge over the Willamette River in more than 30 years. The span will handle trains, buses, streetcars and bicycles – but no cars. The line will run from Portland State University to the Oak Grove area of Clackamas County.

In preliminary engineering, TriMet will spend the next year hiring construction managers and designing the bridge, said spokeswoman Mary Fetsch. Details of station aesthetics also should emerge, she said.

Interstate 5 Columbia River Toll Bridge

In the next few months, state planners will finalize the type of structure they intend to build for the new Interstate 5, 12-lane toll bridge over the Columbia River. The leading candidate for the proposed design comprises two spans over the river, each with two concrete decks held together by diagonal steel beams. Cars would run on the upper decks – northbound on one span, southbound on the other. Light-rail trains would run under one span with bikes and pedestrians under the other.

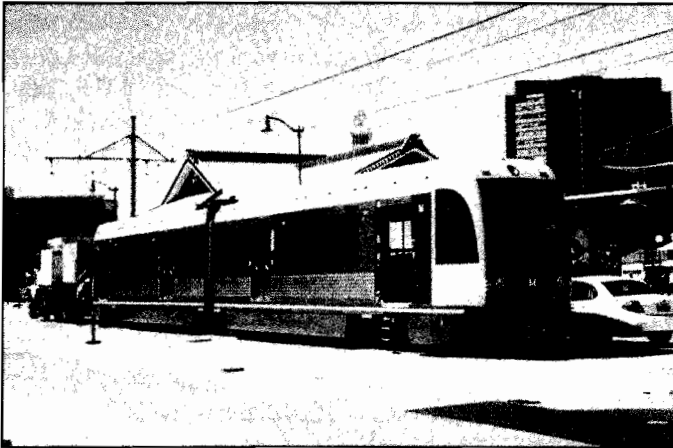
“We feel like we’ve done a lot of work – to come up with a bridge concept that’s fairly advanced, and we’re very much in refinement discussions,” said Robert Turton, an engineer on contract for the Columbia River Crossing project.

With a bridge site constrained in every direction, planners say they’ve come up with the best solution for the location. It can’t have high towers and cables like a suspension bridge because that would infringe on protected airspace for Vancouver’s small Pearson airfield. Make it too low, and barges can’t pass underneath.

The complex project has turned the normal factions in design upside down. In the United States, engineers normally design bridges by focusing exclusively on functional concerns, while architects are the champions of aesthetic appeal. On the I-5 bridge project, engineers such as Ron Anderson, an engineer with Portland’s David Evans & Associates, the lead contractor on the project, and Turton have decided that the flattest possible bridge is the right solution. But bowing to pressure for an appealing design, they offer to allow aesthetic add-ons.

Those include green half-arches at each end of the bridge, signaling the state border and riverbank. A Florida architect hired to suggest add-ons proposes salmon mosaics on bridge support piers, facing the fishers that pass on boats. Architects on the design advisory committee urge a design with inherent beauty, with no add-ons that can be removed in later plans.

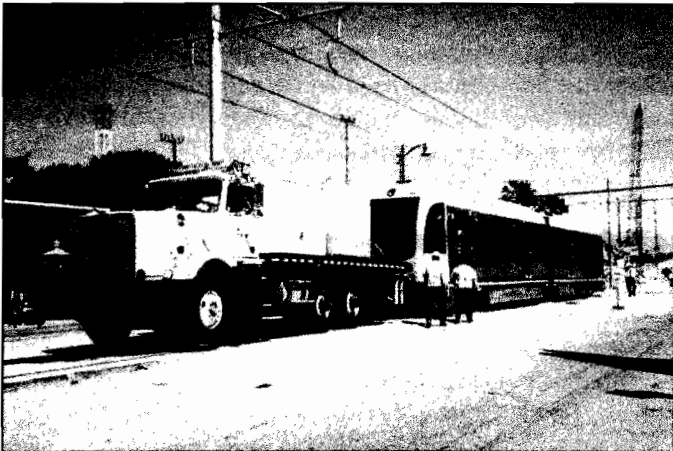
[Oregon info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]



Light Rail Car 717 pulled by Hi Rail Truck for testing of clearance on March 28, 2009. Photo by John Whitmeyer



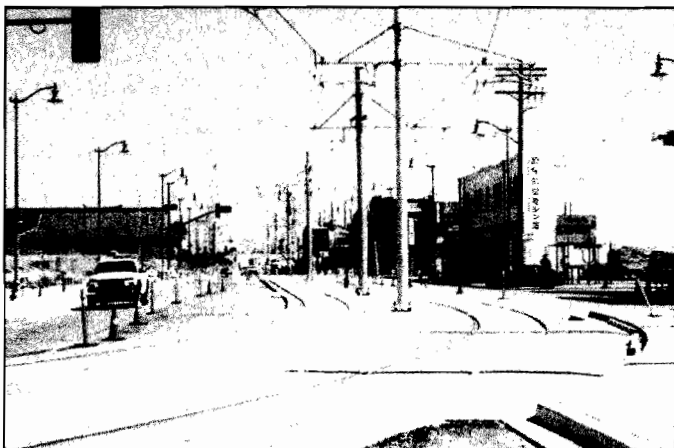
View east on E. 3rd Street from S. Gage Ave. with track passing under Freeway I-710. Photo by John Whitmeyer



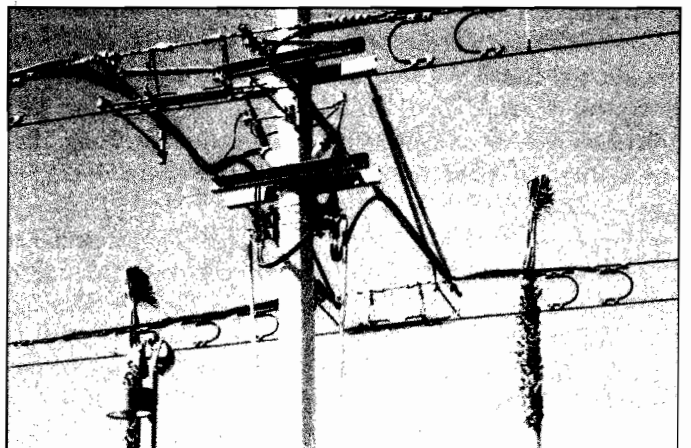
Light Rail Car pulled by Hi Rail Truck on 1st Street on March 28, 2009. Photo by John Whitmeyer



Station at end of track at W. Pomona Blvd. (extention. of 3rd St) and S. Atlantic Blvd. Photo by John Whitmeyer



View east on E. 1st Street from N. Alameda Street on March 28, 2009. Photo by John Whitmeyer



Overhead construction at end of track at W. Pomona Blvd. and S. Atlantic Blvd. Photo by John Whitmeyer